REMARKS

Request for Reconsideration

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action but remain of the opinion that patentable subject matter is present.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims Status

Claims 1-42 are pending in this Application.

Claims 3-6, 9-12, and 15-18 have been withdrawn.

Claims 1, 7, 13 and 19-39 are currently under examination.

Claim 1 has been amended to add the limitations of Claim 2 and Claim 2 has been canceled herein.

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Claim 7 has been amended to add the limitations of Claim 8 and Claim 8 has been canceled herein.

Claim 13 has been amended to add the limitations of Claim 14 and Claim 14 has been canceled herein.

Claims 40-42 have also been canceled.

Claim 19 has been amended to correct obvious typographical errors.

Respectfully, these amendments add no new matter.

The Present Invention

Claims 1, 7, and 13 are independent claims upon which all of the other claims ultimately depend. Each one of the independent claims recites a two-step process. First, the captured-image data is subject to a smoothing operation and a compensating operation to compensate for photographic apparatus characteristics and to generate scene-referred image data. The second step is to subject the scene-referred image data to a sharpening operation to generate

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viewing image referred image data. Thus, the smoothing and compensating operations are conducted on the original image data and then the sharpening operation is conducted.

As described in the Specification at page 100, line 6 to page 101, line 5, a smoothing processing is applied to digital image data outputted from the image-capturing device in the process of generating the scene-referred image data. The process for generating the scene-referred image data is a process to correct captured-image data for image-capturing device characteristics and it is in a state such that the information volume (for example, the number of gray levels and the number of pixels) of the digital image data to become the object of processing is large and the cause of the noise generation which is specific to each image capturing device is clearer; therefore, a more suitable smoothing processing can be practiced.

Furthermore, in accordance with the present Invention, a sharpening processing is applied to the scene-referred image data in the generating process of viewing image referred image data. The generation process of viewing image referred image data is a process to practice image processing for optimizing digital image data in accordance

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with the output device or the output medium and by the
application of a sharpening process in accordance with the
output device or the output medium, subjectively desirable
images can be obtained on the output medium.

It is submitted that none of the references cited by
the Examiner teach the sequential steps of first smoothing
and compensating followed by the step of sharpening.   Each
of the independent claims, Claims 1, 7 and 13 recite these
sequential steps.

Specification Objections

The Title of the Invention had been objected to as not
being descriptive.   A new Title is submitted herewith which
is deemed to be descriptive of the current Invention.

Prior Art Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14, 34-36 and 40-42 had been
rejected as being anticipated by Nagao; and Claims 22-27
had been rejected as being unpatentable over a combination
of Nagao and Keyes.

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As noted above, each one of the independent claims herein, Claims 1, 7, and 13 have been amended to recite the sequential steps of first smoothing and compensating and then sharpening.

Viewing Nagao and, specifically, Figures 1, 5, 9, and 10, it can be seen that Nagao teaches a smoothing processing and a sharpening process in parallel, after the edge of the image is detected by obtaining the difference (ΔIeg) between the sharpness enhanced image (Is) and the smoothed image (Iav). Namely, in Nagao's disclosure, in order to obtain the difference (ΔIeg), the smoothing processing and the sharpening processing are necessarily conducted in parallel onto the original image.

Therefore, Nagao does not disclose or suggest the sequential processing as recited in the independent claims herein. As noted above, each one of the independent claims, Claims 1, 7, and 13, recite these two sequential processes.

Turning to the secondary reference of Keyes, Keyes does not teach any sequential processing of an image by first smoothing and then sharpening.

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Respectfully, Claims 1, 7 and 13 are patentable over the references taken alone or in combination.

Since the remaining claims under prosecution are all ultimately dependent on either Claims 1, 7 or 13, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims presented herein are patentable over the cited references taken alone or in combination.
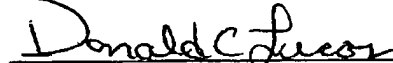
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the Application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Should any fees or extensions of time be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit account #02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,
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